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ABSTRACT

A study investigated ways that adult educators might introduce educational activity into a community problem-solving situation and attempted to determine the influence of this activity on growth of the community-problem-solving group. Adult educators by definition included cooperative extension agents, social workers, community mental health workers, Community Action Program personnel, and pastors; group growth was operationally defined as developing the capacity to solve increasingly complex problems, both community problems groups attempt to solve and problems associated with group operations. (A two-dimensional group growth model and a five-dimensional adult educator model identifying educator functions are included in the study report.) Ten problem-solving situations were studied in small Wisconsin communities. Comparison of field data (gathered by observations and interviews) from five of the ten case studies generated the following hypotheses: group growth is positively influenced by (1) the encouraging function of the educator, (2) the linking-with-knowledge function, (3) the linking-with-human-resources function, (4) trust between adult educator and group, (5) strong feelings about a community problem, (6) group growth in leadership, (7) low activity educator style in a group with well developed leadership capacity, and (8) high activity educator style in a group without well developed leadership capacity; group growth is negatively affected by the enlisting-support function of the educator. These hypotheses do suggest implications for adult educators working with community groups, but they must be tested before definitive conclusions can be drawn. Also, further research may suggest modifications to the group growth and adult educator frameworks developed in this study. (DTT)

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EDUCATOR INFLUENCE ON GROUP GROWTH IN COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

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Community problem solving groups are often a regular part of community life. Members of these groups take action because they are concerned about a particular problem in their community. They may believe the community suffers from inadequate health care facilities, insufficient recreational opportunities, or high unemployment. Or they may believe the community faces potential destruction to the environment.

The group then works toward solution of the problem it has identified. It may help establish a medical clinic, develop a park, or lure new industry into the community. The group may also oppose construction of a new freeway or nuclear power plant.

The educational potential of these action groups has been recognized for some time. Eduard Lindeman argued over thirty years ago that "every social-action group should at the same time be an adult education group."[1] Other adult educators (Poston[2], Gruen[3], McClusky[4], and Houle[5]) have agreed with Lindeman. And Thelen claims these action groups "can be regarded as a vast adult education program directed to the learning of the operational meanings of democracy."[6]

Developing these groups into a setting for continuing education has at least three advantages. First, this form of education can develop individual citizens working on a community problem, as well as lead to social change in the community. Second, by focusing on problems adults face in society, the education deals with their immediate concerns. Furthermore, the problems are not simulated classroom models, but "real" situations in the community. Third, members of these action groups are often highly motivated toward working together. Adult educators can capitalize on this momentum for education.

In spite of these advantages, the educational potential of these community problem solving groups has not been fully developed. This paper discusses research which examined community action from the perspective of continuing education.

The Research Problem

An adult educator working with a community group is one way to develop its educational potential. This study sought ways an educator might introduce educational activity into a community problem-solving situation. It then attempted to determine the influence of this activity on growth of the community problem-solving group.

The study was part of a research project focusing on growth as an outcome of community problem-solving activity. The research assumed that individuals could grow, community groups could grow, and the community as a whole could grow. It further assumed that growth of a community problem-solving group could lead to continuing individual and community growth.

In this study a community problem-solving group is defined as

> "a group of citizens which voluntarily attempts to solve a community problem.... It may be part of a planned community development effort, or it may emerge more spontaneously. A community problem-solving group may also be associated with an existing community organization such as a church or service club."[7]

It might, for example, be a committee interested in a particular community problem. Groups part of or appointed by local government were not included in this study.

Education is defined as "those organized and planned activities in which...[people engage] for the purpose of learning."[8] Growth can occur through a variety of experiences, including participation in community problem-solving activity. Only when the intent is to learn in a planned organized manner, however, does education occur. Group growth and the adult educator will be defined later.

Methodology

No literature was found which adequately addressed this research problem. Extensive literature exists on community action (e.g., Rothman[9], Alinsky[10], Biddle and Biddle[11], Brwyn[12], and Wileden[13]) but does not stress education. For the most part, literature on education does not discuss the context of community problem-solving activity. Some educational literature, (McClusky and Houle) was compatible with this research but was not sufficiently comprehensive to serve as a basis for the study.

Because the literature was inadequate, hypothesis testing seemed an unwise approach. Hence, an exploratory study was conducted to generate hypotheses for future testing. Relying in part on the Glaser and Strauss[14] "grounded theory" methodology, the researcher generated these hypotheses from field data. Some literature, though, (notably Biddle and Biddle and Thelen) was used more extensively than Glaser and Strauss seem to suggest. This literature addressed parts of the research problem and was compatible with the study's assumptions. In some instances it helped interpret field data to give it a more conceptual meaning.

Ten community problem-solving situations were studied in small Wisconsin communities. Qualitative data were collected, primarily through interviews with persons involved in these situations. Observations of group meetings and analysis of relevant documents yielded additional data to supplement the interviews. These data, together with the relevant literature, were used to construct frameworks for understanding both group growth and adult educator activity. Hypotheses were then generated by comparing field data from five of the ten case studies. These five case studies were considered the primary groups in the study.

Group Growth Framework

In this section group growth is defined both theoretically and operationally. Three concepts, growth, regression, and plateaus, are included in the operational definition of group growth. Based on this operational definition, a two-dimensional model of group growth is then described.

Theoretical Definition of Group Growth

Group growth is more than adding to the membership list. As used in this research, it draws extensively on John Dewey's ideas on growth. According to Dewey, growth involves developing "active capacities to readjust activity to meet new conditions."[15] It assumes that present learning builds on previous learning. For as Dewey states, "In learning one act, methods are developed good for use in other situations."[16] Thus, growth implies a "cumulative movement of action toward... a later experience of a deeper and more expansive quality."[17]

Although Dewey was describing the growth of individuals, his concept of growth can apply to groups, as well. By assuming that a group is more than the sum of its individual members, one can refer to the group as a whole. A group does consist of individuals, but those individuals interact in certain ways within a particular group. These interactions are unique to the group, rather than to the individual. For in a different group the same individuals will interact differently.

Experiences with groups yield examples of groups which are more than the sum of the parts. Instructional groups are frequently characterized as good or bad. The students or instructors do not mean the individuals in

these groups are good or bad. Instead, they mean the experiences during the course or program were good or bad. Thus, they are referring to the instructional group as a whole. Similarly, when members of a service club describe their group as good, they mean the interaction within that group as a whole is good. They do not mean that certain individuals are good or bad.

Operational Definition of Group Growth

Dewey also discusses how growth occurs. In his estimation, growth

> depends on the presence of a difficulty to be overcome. What is necessary is to arouse the individual to engage in an active quest for information and the production of new ideas and facts. This then becomes the ground for further experiences in which new problems are presented.[18]

Although Dewey again focuses on individual growth, a group can also grow by overcoming difficulties. In this study, these difficulties were understood to be the various problems groups face. Obviously, the community problem a group attempts to solve is one example. But the community groups in this study encountered other problems too. They had to decide, for example, how to organize themselves, how to involve the community in their efforts, as well as what kind of leadership was appropriate.

Group Growth. As Dewey suggests, growth is a continuing process. In order for group growth to continue, the group must continue to solve problems. Further, these additional problems must present greater difficulty to the group than previous problems. As the group solves problems of greater and greater difficulty, it continues to grow. Biddle and Biddle summarize this growth process, claiming that "satisfaction and self-confidence gained from small accomplishments can lead to the contending with more and more difficult problems in a process of continuing growth."[19]

In this study, then, group growth was operationally defined as developing the capacity to solve increasingly complex problems. These problems included the community problem a group was attempting to solve, as well as other problems associated with group operations.

Group growth was not equated with finding a solution to a particular problem. Although difficult to document, group growth involves developing a problem-solving capacity within the group. A group may find an adequate

solution to a particular problem, yet fail to develop this capacity. The adult educator, for example, may essentially solve the problem for the group. Thus, what the group did after solving a first problem helped document growth. A group's progress toward solution of another more difficult problem was considered evidence of growth while solving the first problem. If, on the other hand, a group did not continue problem-solving activity with a more difficult problem, any apparent growth was suspect.

Regression. A group which does not continue problem-solving activity may regress instead. Regression involves failure to develop additional problem-solving capacities. Further, whatever problem-solving capacities already developed in the group degenerate. Thus, regression is a step backward and is the opposite of growth.

Plateaus. A plateau fits between the two extremes of growth and regression. In addition to overcoming difficulties, Dewey suggests that growth also involves "intervals of pause and rest."[20] Plateaus are defined as these temporary pauses in the growth process. They are similar to regression because no new problem-solving capacities are developing. Plateaus differ from regression, however, for problem-solving capacities already developed in the group do not degenerate. Such pauses may help a group consolidate these capacities before proceeding to grow further.

Two-Dimensional Model of Group Growth

As stated earlier, both problems in the community and problems associated with group operations were of interest to this study. These two types of problems formed the basis for understanding group growth. Groups could grow by progressing toward solution of community problems, as well as by progressing toward solution of group problems.

Although interrelated, both kinds of growth were assumed to be distinct dimensions of group growth. Growth which occurred while struggling with a certain group problem would influence growth on the community problem. Yet, growth on group problems could be examined separately from growth on community problems. And although growth on community problems influences growth on group problems, it can also be examined separately.

The two-dimensions of group growth, then, corresponded to community problems and group problems. Each community group was analyzed for evidence of growth, regression, or plateaus on the community problem it attempted to

solve. Of particular interest was whether after solving a first problem, the group progressed toward solution of a second community problem.

Each group was also examined for evidence of growth on group problems. Thelen's framework for understanding groups was used for this dimension. His assumptions about groups were compatible with this research, and he specifically discussed community problem-solving groups. Use of this framework during initial phases of data collection confirmed its usefulness Five of the Thelen's six concepts of group activity were included as problems for a group to solve. These concepts are membership, integration, control, leadership, and community.[21]

Regression and plateaus were assumed relevant to group problems as well. The research methodology, however, did not yield good evidence of regression and plateaus for group problems.

Adult Educator Framework

This section defines an adult educator and discusses his or her relationship with a community problem-solving group. A five-dimensional model for understanding this educator is presented, and two of the five dimensions are described in detail.

Adult Educator Defined

An adult educator is defined as a professional person who seeks to develop the educational potential of community problem-solving activity. Although helping the group work toward solution of a community problem, this professional is particularly interested in education. Thus, whenever assisting the group, the educator intends for education to occur. Franklin claims this educator helps...

> "...those comprising the client system learn the how and why of change or development. He takes initiative in generating a learning environment for change.... He helps delineate what the client needs to know throughout the process and helps the client obtain such knowledge or skill from available sources, including himself.... The problem is not the sole consideration for the educator.... He is aware of the client system's process of development. He remains as sensitive to the organic life of the group as to its chosen target."[22]

The adult educator in this context, then, has two goals in mind. One goal is to help a group move toward solution of a community problem. More

importantly, though, the educator aims to introduce educational activity in the midst of community problem-solving activity.

This educator works on a continuing basis with the group. Thus, the educator is distinct from a consultant or a resource person, which has only limited involvement with the group for a limited time. Further, the educator is not considered a regular member of the group, nor its leader. Rather, the professional occupies a special place in the group as an educator. *Figure 1* illustrates the relationship of the educator to the group. This relationship is assumed to be transactional. That is, the educator influences what the group does, but the group also influences the educator's behavior.

Relationship of the Adult Educator to the Community Problem-Solving Group

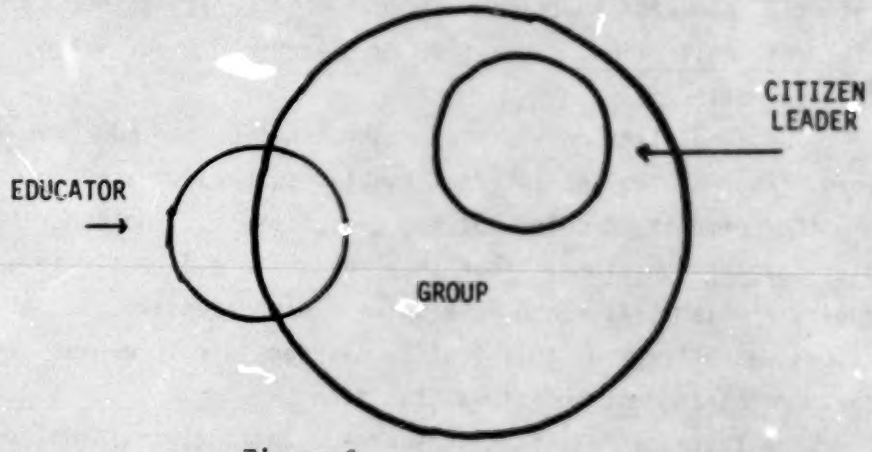

Figure 1

In one sense, the educator is part of the group, since both the educator and the group are working together on a community problem. In another sense, though, this professional comes with the perspective of an educator and thus is distinct from the group.

Included in this definition of an adult educator are Cooperative Extension agents, social workers, community mental health workers, Community Action Program (CAP) personnel, and pastors. Some of these professionals would work with a community problem-solving group as only part of their professional duties. The definition does not include an individual who works with a community problem-solving group as a private citizen.[23]

Five-Dimensional Model of the Adult Educator

The adult educator's activity in a community problem-solving situation is considered to have five dimensions. These dimensions are what, how, when, where, and with whom. What the educator does is obviously important. The literature describes varieties of professional activity in the context of community action. How the educator performs a certain activity is also important. One way may lead easily to educational activity with a given group, whereas another way could stifle opportunity for education. These two dimensions were systematically developed in the study and are discussed in the following sections.

What. This dimension involves various functions a professional educator might perform. Relying extensively on relevant literature, a list of potential educator functions was developed early in the study to guide initial data collection. This list was later modified, taking into account field data collected.

The final list consists of eight functions an educator might perform. Four are called internal functions, because they focus on activity within the community problem-solving group itself. The other four are labeled problem-solving functions, since they relate more directly to work on the community problem. Although developing a comprehensive list of educator functions was attempted, this list is not necessarily exhaustive. Further research might suggest additional functions.

The four internal functions are organizing, training, encouraging, and conciliating. The literature recognizes that organizing a group of citizens for action on a community problem is legitimate professional activity. Although suggesting different kinds of organizing activity, literature written from different perspectives (for example, Alinsky and Biddle and Biddle) note the importance of professional involvement in organizing.

In this study, the organizing function included all efforts by the educator aimed toward forming and maintaining the community problem-solving group. This activity includes, for example, recruiting members for the group, publicizing the potential community problem-solving effort, or finding a place for the group to meet. Similar efforts after the group is formed are also included. For instance, an attempt to recruit new members would also be part of the organizing function.

Simply organizing a group may not be sufficient, for the group may not know how to proceed. Hence, the educator might also engage in training activity. Examples of training activity include helping individuals develop leadership skills, training in techniques of discussion, as well as sensitivity training. The educator might also help group members learn one of the various problem-solving models.

In addition the educator might engage in what Biddle and Biddle describe as encouraging activity.[24] The group may be well-organized and well-trained yet fail to take action. Perhaps the task seems so huge and the resources so small. Or a group may threaten to quit after a promising start, perhaps because it has worked hard and long with the end not yet in sight.

At such times, the professional can simply encourage the group to continue its activity. This function may include helping to build confidence within the group, while urging continued problem-solving activity. For instance, one educator in this study periodically stressed the seriousness of the community problem and assured the group they could solve it.

Another educator spent time listening while performing the encouraging function. Whenever the group faced a crisis, its leader discussed the situation with him. She often expressed her frustrations, and threatened to quit on at least one occasion. In addition to listening, the educator reiterated the importance of the group's activity and urged her to continue her fine work. As this leader later recalled, "He heard me out at my low points."

At times, however, encouraging the group may not be sufficient. Conflicts may develop in the group, and the educator may need to help resolve them. An internal crisis may split the group and jeopardize the entire community problem-solving effort. Faced with such a crisis, the educator might, as Biddle and Biddle suggest, attempt to reconcile the opposing factions.[25] Such activity is an example of the conciliating function.

The four problem-solving functions are linking with knowledge, linking with human resources, enlisting support, and coordinating. Literature describing community action stresses the importance of information. As McClusky notes, "The right information at the right time can help improve the community."[26] Providing this information to the group is included in the

linking with knowledge function. The information can be shared during conversations with group members or via written material. It might be technical information relating to the community problem. For instance, one educator provided information on state statutes governing sanitary districts. This function also includes knowledge of demographic characteristics, community needs, or other information about the community. It may also include, as two educators did, presenting alternative courses of action to the group.

The educator may not always have the most relevant information. Establishing contact between the group and those who do is part of the linking with human resources function. These people then serve as resources to the group for a limited time, sharing for example, technical information or information about the community. One educator arranged for two university faculty members to attend a group's meeting. These faculty members described the advantages and disadvantages of forming a sanitary district. Later, when the group's petitions were declared invalid, the educator advised getting a lawyer and also contacted a state expert on sanitary districts. Part of this function also includes linking the group with people who can assist in more physical ways. These people may help raise money or obtain other material resources necessary for a particular project.

Another problem-solving function involves more initiative to the community. Once a community problem-solving effort is underway, all attempts to gather support from the community are involved in the enlisting support function. It includes getting "legitimization" from influential citizens. These citizens do not necessarily work with the group. Rather, they are urged to support, or at least not oppose, the emerging community problem-solving activity.

One educator performed this function extensively. He worked with the local radio station and weekly newspaper to publicize the group's activity. He also gathered support from the community's more influential churches.

Finally, a similar function with a different focus is coordinating. As Bruyn notes, the educator tries to coordinate the group's activity with other community activity.[27] The previous function directs the community's interest toward the group. The coordinating function, however, directs the

group's attention to the community. For example, the educator may sense an unhealthy competitive attitude within the community problem-solving group. By helping the group coordinate its efforts with those of other community groups, a more cooperative attitude may develop within the group.

These four problem-solving functions plus the four internal functions, formed the what dimension of the adult educator framework. The original plan was to establish relationships between these functions and group growth. As data were collected, some hypotheses emerged. The data revealed, however, that other factors influenced the growth of these groups as well. One factor was the way an educator performed the various functions. This how dimension became the second component of the adult educator framework and is described in the following section.

How. "Style" is the concept on which the how dimension was built. A style suggests "the peculiarly distinctive technique or methods...[used] in the performance of a particular activity.[28] Although each individual is assumed unique, some similarities between people are apparent as well. Hence, a particular style can be identified which is used by more than one educator. Within the style, some variation would occur, due to the individual's unique personality. Yet enough similarity would exist to make a certain style applicable to more than one educator.

Four styles were developed during the study. Although their names were often suggested by the literature, the styles themselves were derived primarily from field data collected. Relevant literature was then used to describe them further. Because these four styles emerged from the five primary case studies, they are not considered an exhaustive list of styles. Further research might suggest additional ways of performing functions.

Styles are considered educational or non-educational. An educational style allows opportunity for planned learning. A non-educational style, on the other hand, hinders opportunities for planned learning.

Three of the four styles are considered educational styles. They are the information provider, the facilitator, and the demonstrator. These three styles can be placed on a hierarchy, according to the extent of educator initiative. At the bottom is the information provider, showing the least amount of educator initiative. Next comes the facilitator, associated with a moderate extent of educator initiative. At the top is the demonstrator style, which is the most active of the three educational styles considered in this study.

The fourth style, considered non-educational, is called the doer. The doer is similar to the demonstrator but does not focus on education. Each of the four styles will now be described in more detail.

An educator using the information provider style concentrates on offering relevant information to the group at the appropriate time. Education occurs as group members interact with this information. Gallaher and Santopolo refer to the extension agent as an information provider when discussing the innovator role.[29] And the style itself is similar to what Franklin describes as the instructor.[30]

An educator using the information provider style likely emphasizes the problem-solving functions. While performing the linking with knowledge function, the educator would present the information and encourage the group to interact with it. Linking with human resources would be approached similarly. The educator would inform the group what resources were available and how to obtain them. The group, then, would take the initiative to contact these people. Education occurs both as the group interacts with the educator and as the group works with these resource people.

The latter two problem-solving functions may not be emphasized as much as the two linking functions. When performing the enlisting support function, the educator would likely note the value of community support. Obtaining this support would be the group's responsibility. The coordinating function would be limited to describing other similar community activities. Cooperation with other community groups would also be the group's responsibility.

The information provider may also perform internal functions but perhaps not as extensively as problem-solving functions. The organizing function would consist of providing information to interested citizens on how to organize a community problem-solving effort. Training would rely heavily upon cognitive information. The educator might, for example, conduct a leadership workshop, discussing principles of leadership and using extensive printed material. Or the educator might outline a problem-solving model which the group could use. Encouraging and conciliating may receive little, if any, attention. Performance of these functions would also rely on cognitive information and may have limited effectiveness.

The facilitator style allows the educator more initiative. Like the previous style, the group assumes primary responsibility for the community problem-solving effort. The facilitator differs from the information provider,

though, by taking whatever initiative is necessary to help the group overcome particular difficulties. Education occurs as the group, with the educator's help, struggles to overcome these difficulties. As used in this study, the facilitator is similar to Franklin's description of the community change educator.[31]

With this style internal functions may be stressed more than problem-solving functions. The group might proceed with as much organizing activity as it can handle. If it has trouble with a particular task, the educator might temporarily assume leadership to help the group overcome this difficulty. Such leadership would also include an explanation of what the educator is doing and how the group might proceed on its own. As soon as the group regains the initiative, the educator can relinquish this leadership role. Developing leadership within the group might be part of the training function. The educator might urge individuals with leadership potential to assume leadership in the group. He or she would then help them accomplish the tasks they found difficult. Urging the group to overcome difficult tasks is an example of the facilitator's use of the encouraging function. Similarly, the facilitator could perform the conciliating function by urging the various factions to resolve their differences.

Problem-solving functions would be important too. The educator might link the group with knowledge by suggesting certain written materials. The group can then take the initiative to find them. Although at times offering information orally, the facilitator would do so less frequently than the information provider. Linking with human resources is performed in a similar fashion. The educator might suggest certain people, but group members would actually approach these resources themselves. Education occurs both in the process of seeking information or human resources, and in interacting with them. Group members would, as much as possible, try to enlist support from the community, but the educator would help them with difficult areas. Similarly, the facilitator would urge the group to coordinate its activities with those of other community groups. He would then help it overcome difficult tasks.

The most active educational style is the <u>demonstrator</u>. An educator using this style does much of the group's work. The intent is to show the group how to work on a given aspect of community problem-solving activity, so that the group can proceed on its own the next time. Education occurs as

the educator involves at least one member of the group in the activity, explaining what is being done and why. Although this style was not observed in the study, it emerged as a way to transform the doer into an educational style.

Much of the literature suggests activity which fits this style. Abshier uses the term as one approach to community development.[32] Biddle and Biddle's professional is quite active during the early stages of community problem-solving activity. After the group is able to function on its own, this professional takes less initiative.[33] Gallaher and Santopolo's innovator role is compatible with this style as well. The innovator demonstrates a particular activity for clients, so they can do it themselves.[34]

The demonstrator may focus on problem-solving functions more than group functions. Enlisting support and coordinating might especailly be emphasized. Working with at least one group member and explaining what is happening, the educator might obtain support from community leaders. The demonstrator might also try to coordinate the group's activities with those of other community groups, while explaining the value of such cooperation. The linking functions, though, would not be forgotten. The educator would actually obtain the human resources for the group and would involve the group members in this activity, so they learn how to obtain resources themselves. The demonstrator would also obtain vital information for the group but would show group members how to obtain similar information in the future.

Group functions would also be performed. The demonstrator might actually organize a community problem-solving group but would involve potential group members in the process. Thus they would learn how to maintain the group's organization, as well as how to organize a future community group. Training might be performed by involving a limited number of group members in many of the educator's activities. The educator would explain the how and why of various leadership activities. When he or she withdraws from an active leadership role, these group members can then assume more responsibility. Likewise, if encouragement or conciliation is needed, the demonstrator would take time to explain the importance of such activity.

Like the demonstrator, the doer is also active. This style differs from the demonstrator, though, by not developing this activity into educational opportunities. Instead the doer's concern is to get the job done. If group

members are involved in the educator's activities, they are not shown the how or why. Thus the doer concentrates on problem-solving assistance rather than education and is considered a non-educational style. Franklin's servitor, who merely does what the client desires, is one example of a doer.[35]

With such a task-oriented emphasis, the doer likely emphasizes problem-solving functions. The professional links the group with knowledge but not for any educational benefit. Knowledge is considered merely a means to solve a community problem. Without involving the group in any way, the doer might link the group with human resources for whatever help they could give in solving the community problem. The doer would enlist support from the community and help coordinate the group's activities with other community groups but would not develop this activity into education.

This professional would perform group functions in a similar manner. If a community problem-solving group needed to be organized, the doer, like the demonstrator, would do it. Unlike the demonstrator, though, the doer would not explain the how or why to potential group members. The encouraging and conciliating functions may be performed if necessary. The professional would strive, though, to keep the group together and working, rather than for education. With little concern for education, the doer may not attempt any training activity.

Other dimensions. Table 1 shows the relation of the what and how dimensions. The remaining three dimensions of adult education activity, when, where, and with whom, were not systematically developed in this research. They are briefly mentioned here as possibilities for further study. Different functions and/or styles may be appropriate at different times during the community problem-solving process. Similarly, where the educator works might also influence group growth. Future research might, for example, compare functions performed and/or styles used during a group meeting, at the educator's office, or in a citizen's home. Finally, whether the educator works with community leaders, the community problem-solving group, or just the group's leaders may also influence group growth.

TABLE 1

ADULT EDUCATOR FUNCTIONS AND STYLES

		Educational Styles		
		Information Provider	Facilitator	Demonstrator*
Internal Functions	Organizing			
	Training			
	Encouraging			
	Conciliating			
Problem Solving Functions	Linking with knowledge			
	Linking with human resources			
	Enlisting support			
	Coordinating			
		Low Activity	Moderate Activity	High Activity

*The doer is the non-educational analogue of the demonstrator.

Hypotheses

Having described both frameworks developed during the study, the adult educator's influence on group growth can now be discussed. The original plan was to generate hypotheses explaining the relationship between the various educator functions and group growth. As the study progressed, however, other factors emerged from the case studies which were influencing group growth as well. One of these factors, how the educator worked with a community problem-solving group, led to developing styles as an additional dimension of the adult educator framework. Hypotheses were generated then, both for the influence of educator functions and for the influence of other factors on group growth. Some of these hypotheses were then linked together as a first step toward building theory in this area.

A crude rating system was developed to help generate hypotheses. Using the qualitative data collected, the extent of group growth was determined for each primary group. Then the five primary groups were ranked both on growth related to community problems and on growth related to group problems. Interestingly enough, these rankings were identical. The top group on growth related to community problems was also highest on growth related to group problems. Because of these identical rankings group growth was considered as a whole when generating hypotheses.

A rating system was also developed for the adult educators. For each primary group, the individual considered an adult educator was rated low, moderate, or high, according to how extensively he performed the various educator functions. The following paragraphs present and discuss the two sets of hypotheses generated, using these rating systems.

Relationship of Educator Functions to Group Growth

Of the eight educator functions, four were hypothesized to influence group growth. The encouraging, linking with knowledge, and linking with human resources functions had a positive influence on growth. The enlisting support function, on the other hand, had a negative influence on growth. No conclusions were apparent for the other four functions. These functions were performed less extensively than the other four, and no clearly identifiable influence on group growth was evident.

1. The encouraging function positively influences group growth. A strong case exists for this hypothesis. In the groups ranking first and second on growth, the educator performed this function extensively. In the group ranking third, the educator encouraged the group only moderately. Two other educators did not perform this function to any significant extent, and their groups ranked fourth and fifth.

2. The linking with knowledge function positively influences group growth. The argument for this hypothesis is slightly weaker. Like the preceding hypothesis, the educator in the group ranking first performed this function extensively. The educator in the group ranking second gave this function only moderate emphasis. The educators in the groups ranking third and fourth linked the group with knowledge to only a limited extent. The remaining educator however, is an exception to this pattern. He performed this function to a moderate extent, but no growth resulted in his group.

3. The linking with human resources function positively influences group growth. Data from three of the primary groups support this hypothesis, but two groups do not. Like the previous hypotheses, the top two groups lend support. The educator in the group ranking first on growth performed this function extensively, and the educator in the group ranking second gave it moderate emphasis. In addition the educator in the group ranking third did not perform this function. The other two groups, though, weaken the case. The group ranking fourth had an educator who extensively linked the group with human resources. And the educator in the group ranking last did so to a moderate extent.

4. The enlisting support function negatively influences group growth. A relatively strong case exists for this hypothesis. An educator which performed this function extensively worked with a group ranking only fourth on growth. Two other educators enlisted support to only a moderate extent, and their groups ranked second and third. By comparison, the educator in the group ranking first did not perform this function at all. The remaining educator though, is a slight exception. He performed this function to a limited extent, and no growth resulted.

Relationship of Other Factors to Group Growth

Because of the other factors clearly influencing group growth, additional hypotheses were generated. Only those factors which the adult educator could

influence were considered. Some factors which affect group growth the educator cannot influence. For instance, three or four attempts had been made during the preceding 15 years to work on the same problem one group was trying to solve. These previous attempts, together with environmental changes which had occurred in the mean time, had some influence on the growth of this group. Such external factors were not of primary interest to this study. Hypotheses which relate to factors which can be controlled are as follows.

1. Trust between the adult educator and the group positively influences group growth. At first this hypothesis seems like an obvious finding not worth mentioning. Yet trust clearly influenced growth of the various groups as much or more than performance of any educator functions. Hence, it is important to this research.

The groups ranking first and second on growth demonstrated extensive trust in their educator. In the top group the educator at one point gave the group admittedly bad advice. His advice severely jeopardized the whole problem-solving effort and set the group back a month or two. Responding to his apology, the group's leader said the group would just pick up the pieces and continue. When interviewed, she and other group members expressed appreciation for all the ways the educator had helped them.

Although to a slightly lesser extent, the group ranking second on growth also demonstrated trust in their educator. Members spoke highly of his interest and enthusiasm. After he had an affair with a group member's wife, they were less enthusiastic. Yet the group continued to work with him and expressed appreciation for his work with the group.

In contrast, the other three groups did not demonstrate such trust in their educators. In the group ranking third on growth, members were skeptical about the educator's contribution. One leader claimed the educator could have done more for the group. Another leader said, "I don't know what he's done for us. He would tell us one thing and then we would hear another." The group ranking fourth on growth expressed appreciation for what the educator had done. Interviews uncovered, however, at least three instances of skepticism about him. One woman was critical of his strategy. Another described a confrontation she had with him, which influenced her to participate less in the group's activities. A third person had disagreed with the educator over division of leadership responsibilities. Finally, the group ranking last on growth had an educator who was new to the community. He had not had time to establish trust with local citizens.

2. Strong feelings about a community problem positively influence group growth. Group members in each of the three groups ranking highest on growth were very concerned about some situation in their community. The top group felt their area should have municipal sewage facilities. Whereas previous efforts had been limited to discussion, this group worked hard to overcome opposition. At one point, the group's leader confronted the county zoning administrator over his lack of cooperation. The group ranking second on growth was deeply concerned for the fate of bald eagles wintering nearby. Although raising $53,000 to purchase land seemed overwhelming, this small citizen group felt it had to try, or the eagles would not survive. All members of the group ranking third were adamant that mobile homes be kept out of rural areas.

By comparison, strong feelings were not apparent in the groups ranking fourth and fifth. Members of one group approved of bringing a Vietnamese family to the community but did not express a strong desire to change any aspect of the community. The other group expressed no particular interest in improving the community.

3. Group growth on leadership positively influences additional group growth. Effective citizen leadership developed within both groups ranking first and second on growth. In the latter group, the leader was very reluctant to assume responsibility. Aided by a mentor relationship with the educator, however, he became more confident of his leadership abilities. This increased self-confidence helped him function as a more effective leader and helped the group grow further. The group ranking first on growth also developed very effective leadership. A very capable woman organized the group, divided the task into manageable pieces, and kept the group working during several crises.

In contrast, the groups ranking fourth and fifth on growth did not develop effective citizen leadership. In the latter group citizens did not demonstrate any leadership. They did not take initiative to work on any community problem. Several citizens in the other group appeared to have leadership qualities, but these qualities went unused. Two different citizens took initiative at different times to organize a community problem-solving group. The educator appeared to squelch this initiative, however, and instead assumed primary leadership himself.

Citizen leadership was also combined with the hierarchy of educator styles described earlier to form yet another hypothesis. This hypothesis has two parts.

4a. If leadership capacity is well-developed in the group, then a low activity style positively influences additional group growth. Two groups studied lend support for this part of the hypothesis. The group ranking first on group growth had a very capable citizen leader. The educator working with this group used a low activity style, the information provider, and extensive growth occurred. On the other hand, at least three citizens seemed capable of assuming some form of leadership in the group ranking fourth on growth. The group's educator, however, assumed a high activity style, and limited growth occurred.

4b. If leadership capacity is not well-developed in the group, then a high activity style positively influences group growth. Two different groups support this part. In the group ranking second on growth, everyone shied away from assuming responsibility. Using a very active style, the educator helped develop effective leadership within the group and additional group growth resulted. In contrast, the group ranking last on growth had an educator who used a less active style. In this group, leadership capacity was not well-developed, and no growth resulted.

Implications of the Study

Because this research was only an exploratory study, its implications are understandably limited. Clearly, the hypotheses presented first must be tested before definitive conclusions can be drawn. In addition further research may suggest modifications to the group growth and adult educator frameworks developed in this study.

The hypotheses generated, however, do suggest implications for adult educators working with community groups. Linking these hypotheses together suggests an approach an educator might use. This approach is an initial step toward building theory in this area.

The hypotheses suggest that educators attend to several factors before performing various functions. First, an educator should establish a trusting relationship with the group. Then the group's strengths and weaknesses should be assessed. This assessment should particularly note both the group's motivation to the task and its capacity for citizen leadership. Based on this assessment, the educator should choose an educational style appropriate to the extent of leadership developing within the group. A low activity style seems best for a group with effective leadership, with

a high activity style best for a group with undeveloped leadership. Although supporting data are not available, a low activity style may also be best for a group with strong feelings about a particular community problem. A high activity style may be better for a group lacking a strong emotional commitment.

Some educators may believe they cannot use the appropriate educational style. They may feel it does not suit their personality. Or a certain style may conflict with the policy of their employing institution. To keep from stifling the group's opportunity for growth in such cases educators should consider not working with the group. An educator, though, might also view the situation as an opportunity for personal growth. By using what at first seems an uncomfortable style, the educator might gradually develop the capacity to use it effectively.

Having chosen the appropriate style, the educator can then perform necessary functions in a manner consistent with the particular style. The educator should remember that the linking with knowledge and linking with human resources functions were shown to contribute positively to group growth. Data suggest, though, that the encouraging function may have an even stronger positive influence on growth. In addition the educator should note that enlisting support from the community may actually stifle group growth.

Finally, the adult educator should note the importance of emotion to the community problem-solving process. Community activity is sometimes portrayed as a rational process, proceeding step-by-step through a problem-solving model. This study, however, has shown that trust between the educator and the group, the group's feelings about the community problem, as well as encouragement provided by the educator, all influence the growth of a community problem-solving group. Emotion is part of each of these factors. Thus, educational activity in the midst of community problem-solving should take into account these emotional influences.

Footnotes

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[19] W. W. Biddle and L. J. Biddle, op. cit., p. 61.

[20] J. Dewey, Art as Experience. New York: Minton, Balch and Company, 1934, p. 23.

[21] H. A. Thelen, op. cit., pp. 222-365.

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[23] Four of the five primary groups had a professional adult educator working with them. The fifth group did not. It was first included to compare the growth of groups having adult educators with the growth of a group without an educator. Field data revealed, however, that one person had worked with the group performing many functions an educator would. Hence, this person was also considered an adult educator in the study.

[24] W. W. Biddle and L. J. Biddle, op. cit., pp. 264-268.

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